

Republic of South Africa

Positions for the Commission on Population and Development

I. Strengthening and Expanding Cooperation on International Migration

The Republic of South Africa shares the sentiment expressed in UN General Assembly resolution A/C.2/69/L.61 that there exists, “[A] need to strengthen synergies between international migration and development at all levels, including the global, regional, national and local levels.”¹ South Africa is invested in finding solutions to regional migration issues, facing large-scale immigration from neighboring countries, especially including Lesotho, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe; according to a South African Migration Project (SAMP) survey.² Since 1994, South Africa’s struggle with xenophobia has been exemplified in the 1.7 million undocumented migrants deported to neighboring countries since 1994, met with reform on immigration policy--the recent Immigration Act in 2002.³ Our country seeks to alter the narrative, domestic and international, surrounding migration, toward a development-focused point of view--underlined by focusing on positions made around terms-of-trade externalities, enforcement externalities, and externalities among receiving countries.⁴ We further affirm the need for and success of regional arrangements in reaching for cooperation on migration, applauding the Dadaab in Kenya, now the largest refugee camp in the world housing 463,000 refugees in its work at absorbing the consequences of instability in neighboring and proximate countries.

South Africa has cooperated with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in assessing and responding to migration push-pull factors in the sub-Saharan region, particularly the depletion of skilled workforces in Zimbabwe, instability in the Horn of Africa, and a simultaneous influx of economic immigrants to South Africa aligning with heightened xenophobia.⁵ South Africa’s Immigration Act of 2002, though politically limited, has succeeded in redefining “immigrant”, expanding visas for temporary migrants, and re-delegating powers of migration restriction to be more democratic.⁶ Holding a firm belief that socioeconomic development is essential to improving dialogue on migration, South Africa has been at the center of coordination within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and proposed in January of 2014 a visa program for migrants from SADC Member States that could lift a burden on institutions home to asylum-seekers.⁷ Among its neighbors, South Africa has the largest United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) program budget, totaling over \$25 million USD, which works to coordinate with NGO’s such as the Agency for Refugee Education and UN bodies such as the UN Development Program (UNDP) and the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) on regional migration cooperation.⁸ According to a report by a UN expert group in 2012, within the sub-Saharan region, migration follows a cyclical trend--with 71.3% of emigrants leaving countries within Southern Africa relocating to others in the sub-region.⁹

Noting this, South Africa strongly encourages the Commission on Population and Development to continue efforts of strengthening relations between regional and international organizations working in migration coordination. As laid out in our National Development Plan 2030, “To accelerate progress, deepen democracy, and

¹ General Assembly of the United Nations. (2014). A/C.2/69/L.61. Retrieved 10 October 2015 from: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N14/666/09/PDF/N1466609.pdf?OpenElement>

² Migration Policy Institute. (2008). South Africa: Policy in the Face of Xenophobia. Retrieved 10 October 2015 from: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/south-africa-policy-face-xenophobia>

³ Ibid

⁴ University of Chicago Law Review. International Cooperation on Migration: Theory and Practice. Retrieved 9 October 2015: https://lawreview.uchicago.edu/sites/lawreview.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/80_1/12%20Sykes_SYMP.pdf

⁵ International Organization for Migration. Regulating Migration. Retrieved 10 October 2015 from: <http://southafrica.iom.int/programme/regulating-migration/#tab2>

⁶ Southern African Legal Information Institute. (2002). Immigration Act 2002. Retrieved 12 October 2015 from: http://www.saflii.org/za/legis/consol_act/ia2002138/

⁷ United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees. (2015). 2015 UNHCR Country Operations Profile: South Africa. Retrieved 9 October 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e485aa6.html>

⁸ Ibid

⁹ UN Expert Group Meeting. (2012). The Demographic Impact of Migration: Evidence from Africa. Retrieved 14 October 2015 from: http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/EGM_MigrationTrends/Demographic%20impact%20migration%20MJW%20UN%203Dec2012%20rev1_SH.pdf

build a more inclusive society, South Africa must translate political emancipation into economic wellbeing for all.”¹⁰ In order for obstructive migration policies to be eroded, South Africa believes the people must first be secure in their economic standing. Development must be the center of the discussion, and plans should incorporate effective multilateral efforts as groups like the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and the SADC have displayed, carrying out UN goals through regional engagement.¹¹ Coordination between UN bodies like UNHCR and UNDP and regional organizations to strengthen migration cooperation through collective development must continue to be an active objective of this committee.

II. Addressing the Challenges of “Megacities”

The Republic of South Africa realizes that the rate at which megacities are developing is astounding, and the effects of urbanization are displayed most clearly in developing Member States. The metropolitan area of Johannesburg- Pretoria is predicted to become a megacity, as this city is expected to pass 10 million inhabitants, the number of inhabitants to classify a megacity, by 2030.¹² Currently, two-thirds of South Africa’s population lives in urban areas, a trend that is being reflected across many other developing Member States.¹³ In South Africa, urbanization swept in after the end of apartheid, and with it came drastic changes for people—especially those residing in urban areas.¹⁴ A majority of developing Member States house megacities, meaning urbanization affects these countries more in particular. South Africa recognizes the negative effects megacity urbanization has in regards to poverty traps, as those who are free to migrate to cities looking for work find that their is insufficient housing, infrastructure, and services to them.¹⁵ Further, the trend toward more megacities is a causal factor in the rise in greenhouse gas emissions, the distribution of economic development, and overburdened social welfare.

South Africa as a participant in the Rio+20 Conference of 2012 recognizes the importance of tempering urbanization and encouraging more sustainability by holding to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: economic development, social development, and environmental protection.¹⁶ In recent years, South Africa has grown to become the second largest economy in Africa, in part from becoming a major producer in natural resources such as platinum, chromium, gold, and iron, and GDP growth averaged 4.5 percent a year from 2002 to 2008.¹⁷ Mining has overall been the largest contributor to growth in GDP in South Africa, as our natural resources have contributed to over half of our exports.¹⁸ On combating negative social effects of urbanization, South Africa has actively supported the goals set in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development of 1992, including combating poverty, by supporting long term objectives that include implementing policies to promote funding on human development, developing poverty stricken areas through resource mobilization, poverty eradication, and focusing on national development plans and budgets on investments in human capital with special policies directed toward urban poor, women and children.¹⁹ In regards to environmental protection, the South African government continues to promote access to basic energy services to impoverished households in order to counteract the negative health impacts arising from the use of less sustainable fuels and encourages the reduction of energy related emissions that are harmful to the environment.²⁰ The White Paper on Energy Policy of 1998 by the South Africa Department of Environmental Affairs has addressed the importance of government working to create affordable and sustainable energy resources, an initiative which is being pursued at the national level.²¹ Furthermore, we have created in 2005 our Energy Efficiency Strategy of the Republic of South Africa, with the goals of improving the health of the nation, job creation, reducing environmental pollution, and improving industrial competition.²² This strategy allows for implementation of low cost interventions in addressing energy efficiency, and is working towards both affordable energy and minimizing energy on human health and the environment.¹²

South Africa having involved itself in past initiatives aimed at addressing rising issues resulting from the increase in megacities, we understand that the issue at hand disproportionately affects developing Member States, which may not have the tools necessary to promote sustainable development. We cannot completely end the negative effects megacity growth is having on these pillars, but this committee can develop solutions to mitigate them. South Africa promotes an approach that is multilateral with short-term and long-term vision. We encourage the creation of plans suitable for addressing each city’s situation, as we understand the variation in needs of different cities and regions. This committee is encourage to look to the Division for Sustainable Development, as well as the

¹⁰ South Africa: National Planning Commission. National Development Plan. Retrieved 20 October 2015 from: <http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/Executive%20Summary-NDP%202030%20-%20Our%20future%20-%20make%20it%20work.pdf>

¹¹ South Africa Institute for International Affairs. (2014). A Transformative post-2015 Development Agenda: What Role for South Africa? Retrieved 16 October 2015 from: <http://www.saiia.org.za/opinion-analysis/a-transformative-post-2015-development-agenda-%E2%80%93-what-role-for-south-africa>

Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future in addressing these solutions.

-
- 12United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2014). World Urbanization Prospects. Retrieved 4 October 2015 from: <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Highlights/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf>
- 13 SouthAfrica.Info. (2013). South Africa 'Two-Thirds Urbanised'. http://www.southafrica.info/news/urbanisation-240113.htm#_ViYh6xNVikp
- 14Turok. (2012). Urbanisation and Development in South Africa: Economic Imperatives, Spatial Distortions and Strategic Responses. Retrieved 4 October 2015 from: http://www.delog.org/cms/upload/pdf-africa/Urbanisation_and_Development_in_South_Africa_-_Economic_Imperatives_Spatial_Distortions_and_Strategic_Responses.pdf
- 15Ibid
- 16United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2014). World Urbanization Prospects. Retrieved 4 October 2015 from: <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Highlights/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf>
- 17Iborda. (2015). South Africa GDP Growth Rate. Retrieved 12 October 2015 from: <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/south-africa/gdp-growth>
- 18Republic of South Africa. National Planning Commission. (2012). Our Future - Make It Work: National Planning Commission: National Development Plan 2030 Executive Summary. Retrieved 20 October 2015 from: <http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/Executive%20Summary-NDP%202030%20-%20Our%20future%20-%20make%20it%20work.pdf>
- 19United Nations Sustainable Development. (1992). United Nations Conference on Environment and Development Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Retrieved 2 October 2015 from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf>
- 20Republic of South Africa Department of Environmental Affairs. (2007). State of the Environment. Retrieved 4 October 2015 from: <http://soer.deat.gov.za/385.html>
- 21Republic of South Africa Department of Minerals and Energy. (1998). White Paper on the Energy Policy of the Republic of South Africa. Retrieved 2 October 2015 from: http://www.energy.gov.za/files/policies/whitepaper_energypolicy_1998.pdf
- 22Republic of South Africa Department of Minerals and Energy. (2005). Energy Efficiency Strategy of the Republic of South Africa. Retrieved 2 October 2015 from: http://www.energy.gov.za/files/esources/electricity/ee_strategy_05.pdf
- 23Ibid